

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4467

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN SHOULD READ 4467 VICE 4375)

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINS, AO, SF

SUBJECT: ANGOLA SITUATION: CONVERSATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

1. PRIME MINISTER VORSTER CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE AT 5 PM LOCAL TIME TO DISCUSS MOUNTING SAG CONCERN OVER THE ANGOLA SITUATION. HE RECEIVED ME WITH FONMIN MULLER AND FIRST REVIEWED IN GENERAL TERMS THE BATTLE FIELD SITUATION USING A SPECIALLY PREPARED MAP FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT WITHOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF SOPHISTICATED SOVIET ARMS AND CUBAN COMBAT PERSONNEL, THE COMBINED FNLA-UNITA FORCES WERE DOING QUITE WELL IN PUSHING THE MPLA BACK. HE FEARED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS SITUATION MIGHT QUICKLY CHANGE WITH THE FURTHER INTRODUCTION OF SOPHISTICATED SOVIET EQUIPMENT. THIS AFTERNOON HE HAD RECEIVED WORD THAT THE CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED FOREIGN AIRLINES THAT THE BRAZZAVILLE AIRPORT WOULD BE CLOSED AS OF MIDNIGHT TONIGHT TO CIVILIAN TRAFFIC. HIS INTERPREATION OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS THAT IT COULD ONLY MEAN THAT THE SOVIET MIGS, WHICH ARE KNOWN TO BE IN THE CONGO, ARE TO BECOME OPERATIONAL. IF THIS IS THE CASE, THE FNLA-UNITA FORCES WOULD HAVE NOTHING WITH WHICH TO MEET THE AIR ASSAULT AND WOULD HAVE NO

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ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RETREAT. IT WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER

OF TIME BEFORE THE MPLA COULD TURN THE TIDE AGAINST
FNLA-UNITA, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE SOUTHERN FRONT.

2. PRIME MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT A MPLA VICTORY
WOULD HAVE NOT ONLY SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS IN ANGOLA
ITSELF BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THROUGHOUT ALL OF SOUTHER
AFRICA. IN SUPPORT OF THIS ASSERTION HE REFERRED TO
THE VULNERABILITY OF ZAIRE, ZAMBIA, RHODESIA AND
BOTSWANA TO INSURGENT ACTIVITIES FROM ANGOLA. IT COULD
ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VERY PROMISING NEGOTIATIONS
NOW GOING ON BETWEEN SMITH AND NKOMO IN RHODESIA. (HIS
DESCRIPTION OF STATUS OF THESE ALKS TO BE COVERED IN
SEPARATE TELEGRAM.) AS FAR AS SOUTH WEST AFRICA IS
CONCERNED, THE PRIME MINISER SAID THAT THOUSANDS OF
BLACK REFUGEES WITH ALL THEIR CATTLE WOULD POUR ACROSS
THE OVAMBO BORDER CREATING SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR SWA
AND THE SAG. THIS IN TURN COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE
SWA CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS NOW IN PROGRESS IN WINDHOEK.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED FOR THE US VIEWS ON THE
ANGOLA SITUATION. I REVIEWED OUR POSITION AS SET
FORTH IN STATE 265503, PARTICULARLY PARAGRAPH 7. I
ALSO BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ON ANGOLA IN YOUR NOV 10 PRESS CONFERENCE. THE PRIME
MINISTER DID NOT ASK FOR ANY SPECIFIC ACTION OR
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEYOND REQUESTING THAT HIS VIEWS
BE COMMUNICATED TO PRESIDENT FORD. HOWEVER, IN HIS
CONCLUDING REMARK THAT WITHOUT SOVIET INTERVENTION
FNLA AND UNITA COULD MORE THAN HOLD THEIR OWN AND
ONLY THE US "AS OUR LEADER" COULD DISSUADE THE SOVIETS
FROM FURTHER INVOLVEMENT, HE WAS IMPLICITLY ASKING
THAT WE DO SOMETHING TO PREVENT THE MPLA FROM RECEIVING
REINFORCEMENTS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO MOVE ON THE OFFENSIVE.

4. I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I WOULD IMMEDIATELY
FORWARD HIS VIEWS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND WOULD BE IN
TOUCH WITH HIM IF I RECEIVED FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ON
THE MATTER.

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